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Islam et al.

[45] **Date of Patent:** Sep. 7, 1999[54] **RAID ARRAY CONFIGURATION
SYNCHRONIZATION AT POWER ON**[75] Inventors: **Shah Mohammad Rezaul Islam**, Cary;
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[21] Appl. No.: 08/887,391

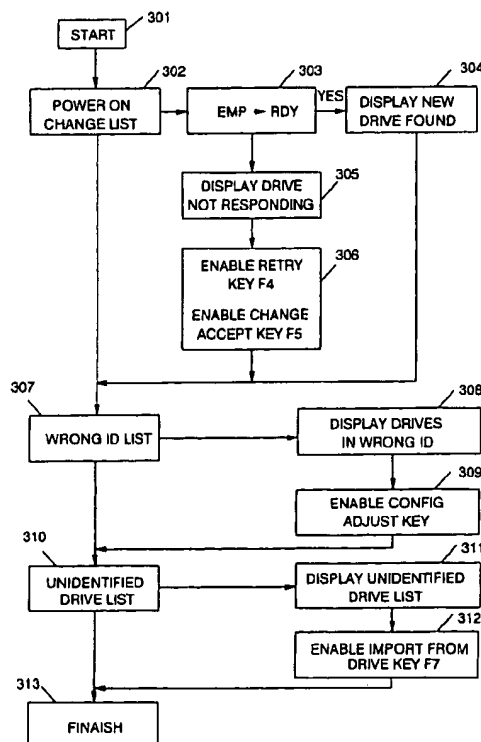
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28, 1997.[51] Int. Cl.⁶ G06F 13/10

[52] U.S. Cl. 711/156; 711/114; 710/10

[58] Field of Search 395/828, 829,
395/830; 711/154, 156, 166, 114; 710/8,
9, 10[56] **References Cited****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**5,237,689 8/1993 Behnke 395/651
5,440,716 8/1995 Schultz et al. 711/114*Primary Examiner*—Eddie P. Chan*Assistant Examiner*—Kevin L. Ellis*Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Martin J. McKinley[57] **ABSTRACT**

Because correct configuration data is essential to the operation of any RAID system, and because multiple copies of the configuration data are kept, not only in the RAID controller itself, but also in each disk drive unit in the configuration, it is imperative that the various copies of the configuration data do not become "out of synchronization", which means that one or more copies of the configuration data are different from one or more other copies of the configuration data. To maintain synchronization of all copies of the configuration data, the current invention compares the configuration data stored in the RAID controller's NVRAM to that of the current system, and records any new, non-responding, repositioned or unidentified storage devices in a change list. The identities and the attachment points of any storage devices in the change list are then displayed to the user, and various options for correcting the lack of synchronization are provided by enabling one or more function keys that may be selected by the user. One such function key, an "accept change" key, causes the configuration data to be modified by changing the current operational state of any non-responding storage device. A "configuration adjustment" key, when selected by the user, causes the configuration data to be modified to reflect any changes in the attachments points of any repositioned storage devices. An "import configuration" key causes the configuration data to be changed to correspond to that of an unidentified storage device. And a "retry" key gives the user an opportunity to rearrange the system and then re-compares the configuration data in the controller to the current system configuration.

5 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

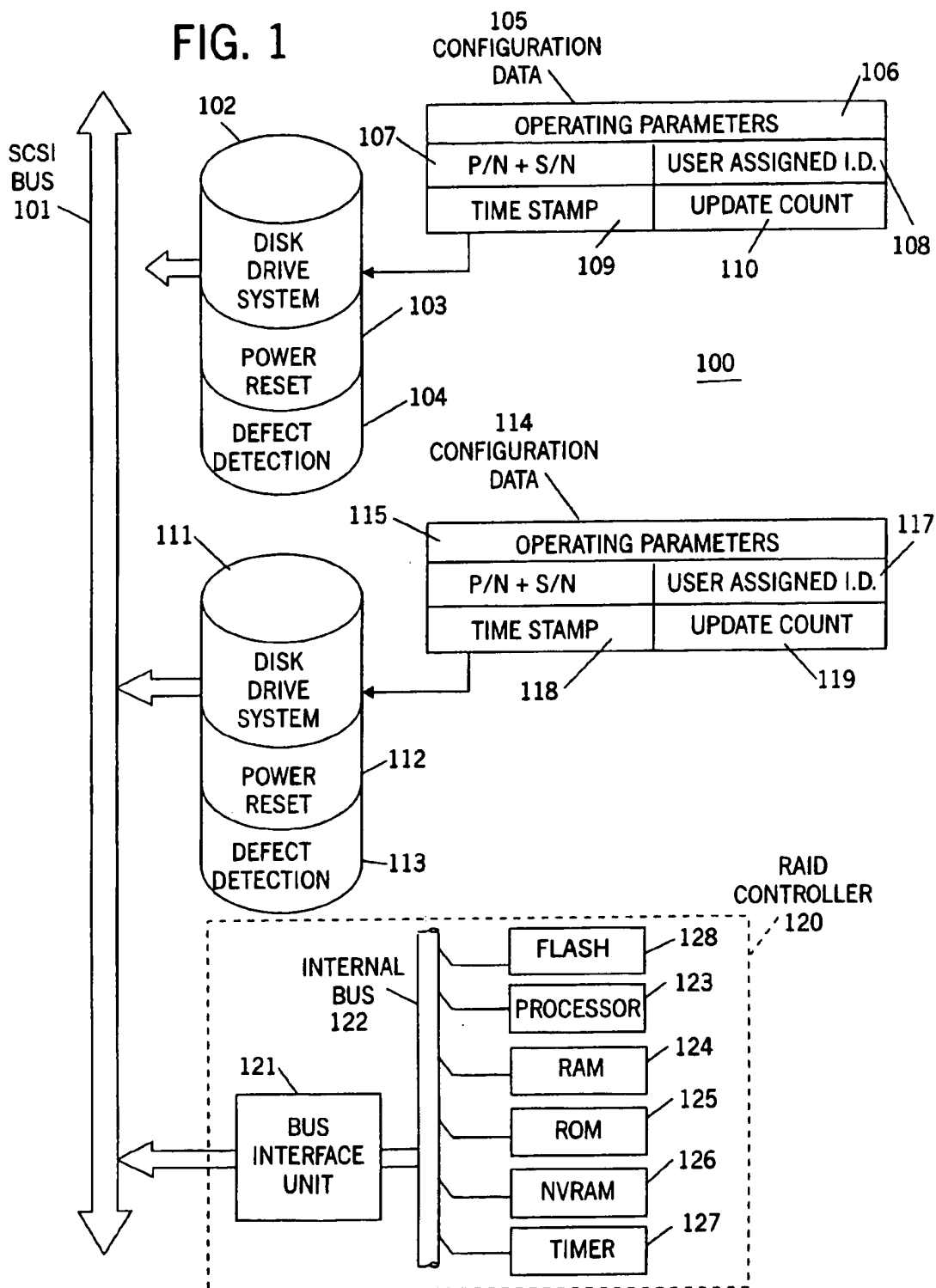


FIG. 2

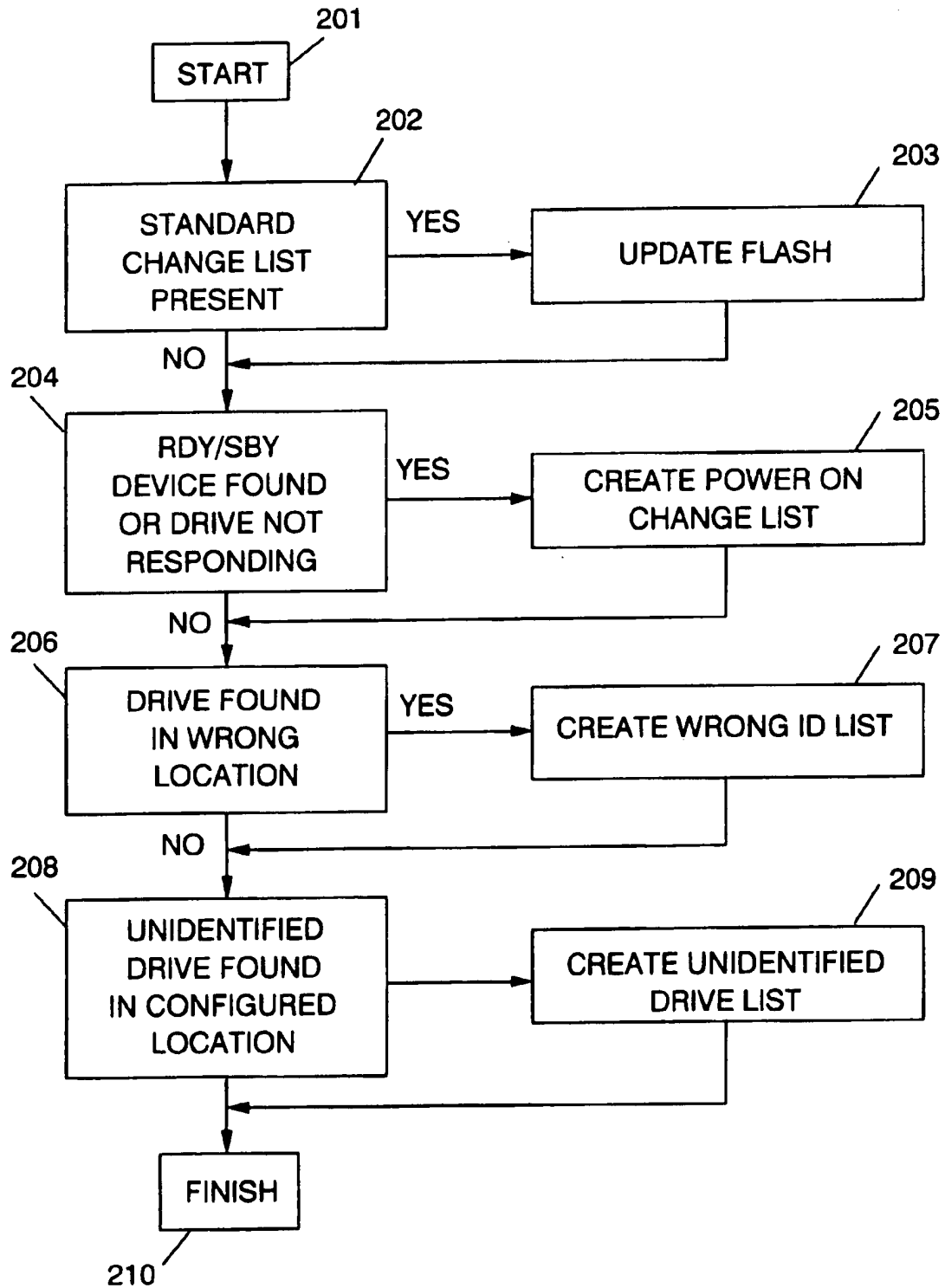


FIG. 3

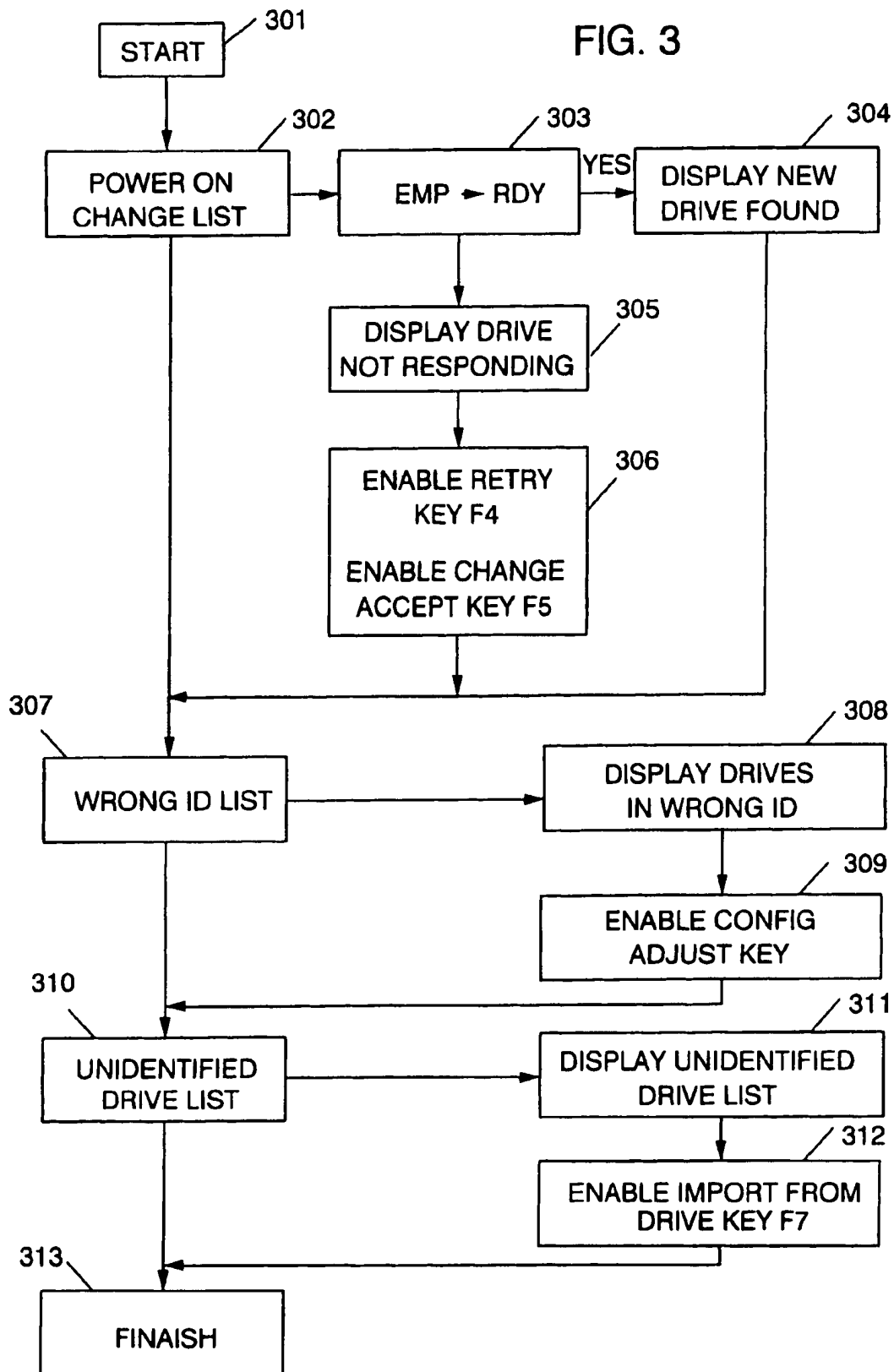


FIG. 4A	FIG. 4B
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FIG. 4

FIG. 4A

Rx ► Ry	Condition	Dlr	SB1
R0 ► R0	NCD >= NCS NCD < NCS	TD BU	0 min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
R0 ► R1	NCD > 2NCS NCD <= 2NCS	TD BU	0 min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
R0 ► R5	NCD <= NCS+1	BU	min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
	NCD > NCS+1 ;	BU	(NCD - 2) *SUS
		TD	N/A
R1 ► R0	2NCD > NCS 2NCD <= NCS	TD BU	0 min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
R1 ► R1	NCD >= NCS NCD < NCS	TD BU	0 min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
R1 ► R5	2(NCD-1) <= NCS	BU	min{EBSmax,EBDmax}
	2(NCD-1) > NCS ;	TD	N/A
	(order i/i imp) ;	BU	(NCD-2)*SUS
R5 ► R0	NCD > NCS-2	TD	0
	NCD <= NCS-2 ;	TD	0
		BU	N/A
R5 ► R1	NCD >= 2(NCS-1)	TD	0
	NCD < 2(NCS-1) ;	TD	0
		BU	N/A
R5 ► R5	NCD >= NCS	TD	0
	NCD < NCS ;	TD	0
		BU	N/A

FIG. 4B

EB1	SB2	EB2
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ 0	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ 0	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
0	N/A	N/A
0 N/A	N/A (NCD-1)*SUS	N/A $\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ 0	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ 0	N/A N/A	N/A N/A
0	N/A	N/A
N/A 0	(NCD-1)*SUS N/A	$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ N/A
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ (NCD-1)*SUS N/A	N/A $\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$	N/A N/A (NCD)*SUS
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ (NCD-1)*SUS N/A	N/A $\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$	N/A N/A (NCD)*SUS
$\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$ (NCD-2)*SUS N/A	N/A $\min\{EBS_{\max}, EBD_{\max}\}$	N/A N/A (NCD-1)*SUS

RAID ARRAY CONFIGURATION SYNCHRONIZATION AT POWER ON

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending application Ser. No. 08/864,530 filed May 28, 1997, which is entitled "Run Time Validation Of SCSI RAID Array, Configuration".

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention pertains to computers and other information processing systems and, more particularly, to an information processing system that includes a redundant array of inexpensive disks ("RAID") with a means for synchronizing the disk configuration data.

As the performance of microprocessor and semiconductor memory technology increases, there is a need for improved magnetic disk storage technology with comparable performance enhancements. Unfortunately, the performance of newer processor and semiconductor memory technology has out paced that of magnetic disk storage technology. In 1988, however, a paper published by Patterson, Gibson and Katz ("A Case For Redundant Arrays Of Inexpensive Disks (RAID)"; International Conference On Management Of Data; pp. 109-116; June 1988) laid the foundation for the use of a redundant array of inexpensive disks ("RAID") that would not only significantly improve the data transfer rate and data I/O rate over a comparable single disk access, but would also provide error correcting redundancy and lower cost. In their paper, Patterson, Gibson and Katz described five "levels" of RAID systems, which are briefly described below (RAID-1 through RAID-5). Since that time, other RAID levels have been described, two of which are also briefly described below (RAID-0 and RAID-6).

Most RAID systems incorporate both redundancy and some form of data interleaving, which distributes the data over all the data disks in the array. Redundancy is usually in the form of an error correcting code, with simple parity schemes predominating. However, RAID-1 uses a "mirroring" redundancy scheme in which duplicate copies of the same data are stored on two separate disks in the array. Parity and other error correcting codes are either stored on one or more disks dedicated for that purpose only, or they may be distributed over all the disks in the array. Data interleaving is usually in the form of data "striping" in which the data to be stored is broken down into blocks called "stripe units", which are then distributed across the data disks. A typical size of a stripe unit is 8K to 64K Bytes. A "stripe" is a group of corresponding stripe units, one stripe unit from each disk in the array. Thus, the "stripe size" is equal to the size of a stripe unit times the number of data disks in the array. Data interleaving may also be accomplished on a bit-by-bit basis, such as is described in more detail below with regards to RAID-3. Six RAID levels will now be described.

RAID-0 utilizes data striping, but does not use redundancy. RAID-0 has a lower cost than any other RAID level, and its write performance is the best because there is no writing of redundant information. The primary disadvantage of RAID-0 is its lack of redundancy. Consequently, any single disk failure in the array results in lost data.

RAID-1 uses mirroring in which identical data is stored on two disks. An advantage of RAID-1 is that it is simple to implement in software. RAID-1 is also error correcting because complete recover is possible from the failure of any

one disk drive by simply switching to the drive that contains the duplicate copy of the data. After replacing the defective drive, the data on the duplicate drive can be recopied to the replacement drive. When servicing two or more requests to read data that is stored on the same disk, RAID-1 has a faster read rate than RAID-0 because one request can be serviced from the first disk, and the second request can be simultaneously serviced by the duplicate disk. A disadvantage of RAID-1 is that it is expensive because it requires two times the number of drives necessary to stored the same data. Thus, its efficiency is always $\frac{1}{2}$. The necessity of making duplicate copies of all data also makes this RAID level somewhat slow to write data.

RAID-2 uses error correcting codes such as those found in error correcting semiconductor memory systems.

RAID-3 uses a separate parity disk to store error correcting parity information and a plurality of data disks that contain bit interleaved data information. Unlike semiconductor memories, a faulty disk drive is usually easily identified because disk drives and their associated controllers typically contain sophisticated error detecting mechanisms that can quickly identify a failed drive. Consequently, if a single data drive has failed, the contents of the failed drive can be easily reconstructed using the information from the "good" data drives plus the parity drive. Conceptually, the reconstruction of a specific bit of a failed drive could be accomplished by calculating the parity of the corresponding bit of each of the "good" drives and then comparing it to the corresponding bit of the parity drive. For example, if the parity of the first bit of each of the "good" drives is a logical 0, and the first bit of the parity drive is a logical 1, then the first bit of the failed drive must have been a logical 1 (because the parity of the first bit of all the data drives must equal logical 1, in this example). Mathematically speaking, the data on the failed disk can be calculated by starting with the parity information from the parity drive and subtracting, modulo two, the corresponding information on the "good" data drives. If, on the other hand, the parity drive fails, parity is easily reconstructed from all the data drives.

For this RAID level, data is bit interleaved on the data disks. For example, a basic RAID-3 system in which data is organized in 8 bit bytes and having 8 data disks and one parity disk would store the first bit of every byte on the first disk, the second bit of every byte on the second disk, on so on. Thus, a write request simultaneously accesses all 8 data disks plus the parity disk, while a read request accesses all 8 data disks. Consequently, the data rate, which is the rate at which data can be written to or read from sequential locations on the disk without head repositioning, is very high for RAID-3. A primary disadvantage of this RAID level is that it only permits one request to be serviced at any one time. RAID-3 systems also have relatively low I/O rates, which is the rate at which data can be written to random locations on the disk, thereby requiring frequent head repositioning.

RAID4 also uses a separate parity disk to store error correcting parity information and a plurality of data disks that contain interleaved data information. Unlike RAID-3, in which data is bit interleaved across the data disks, RAID4 uses block interleaving or data striping, which is described in more detail above.

The performance of RAID4 is particularly dependent on the type of access requested, read or write, and the size of the requested access relative to the size of the stripe unit and the size of the stripe. A request to read a block of data that is contained entirely within one stripe unit can be quickly serviced as soon as the disk drive containing the requested

data becomes available. Consequently, multiple requests to read various blocks of data, each of which is entirely contained within one stripe unit on a different data drive, can be serviced simultaneously. In contrast, a RAID-3 system must service multiple requests serially, and if head repositioning is required between the servicing of each request, the performance of a RAID-3 system will be dramatically slower than a RAID-4 system for this type of access. A read operation of stripe size data blocks can also be very fast in RAID4, particularly if scheduling permits all data disks to be accessed at one time.

A request to write data to a single stripe unit can be a relatively slow process, because it requires four disk accesses. Specifically, a data write to a single stripe unit requires that the old data and corresponding parity information be read from the appropriate data disk and the parity disk. Next, new parity information is computed using the old data, the new data and the old parity. Finally, the new data and the new parity are written to the data and parity disks, respectively. Requests for multiple writes to various stripe units located on different drives and in different stripes is even more problematic, because each write requires a read and write operation to the parity disk and, since there is only one parity disk, it can become "bottle necked." Writing an entire stripe of data is much easier because no read operations are required and the parity for the new stripe of data is easily computed.

RAID-5 is similar to RAID-4 in that it interleaves data by stripe units across the various disk drives, and also stores error correcting parity information. In RAID-5, however, there is no dedicated parity disk as there is in RAID-3 and RAID4. Instead, RAID-5 distributes parity across all the disk drives, thereby eliminating the parity disk bottleneck problem described above with regards to certain write operations of RAID4 systems. Furthermore, because RAID-5 distributes data over all the disks, and RAID4 only distributes data over the data disks (which is equal to the total number of disks minus the total number of parity disks), RAID-5 has a slight performance advantage over RAID4. With these performance enhancements, RAID-5 is usually preferred over RAID4 and, consequently, most RAID4 systems have disappeared from the market to be replaced by RAID-5 systems.

RAID-6 is similar to RAID-5 in that it interleaves data in stripe units and distributes parity information across all the disk drives. A disadvantage of RAID-5, as well as RAID-3 and RAID4, is its inability to correct a failure in more than one single disk. As the size of disk arrays increases, however, the probability of a failure in more than one drive also increases which, in turn, increases the chance of an unrecoverable failure. To overcome the problem of a two disk failure, RAID-6 uses Reed-Solomon codes in a P+Q redundancy scheme that can recover from a failure of any two disks. One disadvantage of RAID-6 over RAID-5, however, is in the write performance of small amounts of data on the order of one stripe unit in size. Recall that writes of small amounts of data are slow in RAID-5 because four data accesses are required. For such small write operations, RAID-6 is even more inefficient because it requires a total of six accesses to update both the "P" and "Q" information.

Configuration Changes Prior To Power On

A RAID system includes configuration data, which includes operating parameter information for each disk drive in the array. Correct configuration data is essential to the operation of any array of independent disk drives, and loss

of configuration data or inaccuracies in configuration data can be catastrophic. Therefore, to prevent the loss of accurate configuration data, multiple copies of the configuration data are usually kept in various locations throughout the RAID system. In the RAID adapter, one copy of the configuration data is kept in a non-volatile memory (NVRAM) and another copy is kept in a flash memory, while additional copies are kept in each of the disk drives in the array. Each copy of the configuration data stored in the disk drives are usually stored at a predetermined location, for example, the last 16 sectors of each disk. In any one properly configured system, these various copies of the configuration data must all be identical.

There are a number of reason that might cause the various copies of the configuration data of a system to become "out of synchronization", which means that one or more copies of the configuration data are different from one or more other copies of the configuration data in the system. For example, the RAID adapter itself may have been replaced due to its failure or for some other reason. It is even possible to remove and replace the NVRAM or its battery power source from the adapter, thereby causing the loss of all configuration data in the NVRAM. In addition, one or more disk drives may have been added to the system, removed from the system or replaced with different drives.

While many RAID system include "hot swapping" capability, which permits disk drives to be replaced with power on, changes to the physical configuration of disk drives in the array may also occur when the power is off. One particular application for such changes in the physical configuration of disk drives is found in high security systems wherein disk drive units are removed from the host computer system at night and locked up. In the morning, these disk drives are returned to the host system and may, or may not, be plugged back into the same physical "slot" or "bay" in the host system that they were installed in the previous day. Other improper physical configuration errors may also occur, such as the insertion of a "foreign" disk drive into the host system, or the failure to replace one of the disk drives, thereby leaving an empty slot.

Accordingly, the invention described below checks for proper configuration synchronization at power on, warns the user of such configuration errors, and provides numerous options for the user to correct the errors.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, the invention is a RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to the RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points. The RAID system includes means for storing first configuration data, wherein the first configuration data is indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to the RAID system. The first configuration data includes information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of the first plurality of storage devices. Also included is a means for comparing the first configuration data stored in the RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any new storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration but are not a part of the first system configuration, for identifying any non-responding storage devices that are a part of the first system configuration but are not responding in the second system configuration, for identifying any repositioned storage devices that were located at a one attachment point in the first system con-

figuration and were repositioned to a different attachment point in the second system configuration, and for identifying any unidentified storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration but are not a part of the first system configuration. The means for comparing also records the identities and attachment points of any such new, non-responding, repositioned, and unidentified storage devices in a change list. Means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list are also provided. The RAID system also includes means for enabling an "accept change" key in response to the listing of a non-responding storage device in the change list, the accept change key, when activated by a user, causes the first configuration data to be modified by changing the current state of any non-responding drive to a new state. A means for enabling a "configuration adjustment" key in response to the listing of a repositioned storage device in the change list is also included. The configuration adjustment key, when activated by a user, causes the first configuration data to be modified to reflect any changes in the attachment points of any repositioned storage devices. The system further includes means for enabling an "import configuration" key in response to the listing of an unidentified storage device in the change list. The import configuration key, when activated by a user, causes the first configuration data to be modified to correspond to the system configuration of an unidentified storage device. In addition, a means for enabling a "retry" key in response to the listing of a storage device in the change list is also included. The retry key, when activated by a user, causes the means for comparing to re-compare the first configuration data stored in the RAID system to the second system configuration, thereby giving the user an opportunity to rearrange the configuration of the second system configuration to correspond to the first system configuration.

In another embodiment, the invention is a RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to the RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points. The RAID system includes means for storing first configuration data, wherein the first configuration data is indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to the RAID system. The first configuration data includes information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of the first plurality of storage devices. The system also includes means for comparing the first configuration data stored in the RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any unidentified storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration, but are not part of the first system configuration. The means for comparing also includes means for recording the identities and attachment points of any such unidentified storage devices in a change list. In addition, the system further includes means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list. Also included in the system is a means for enabling an "import configuration" key in response to the listing of an unidentified storage device in the change list, the import configuration key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified to correspond to the system configuration of an unidentified storage device.

In yet another embodiment, the invention is a RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to said RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points. The RAID system includes means for storing first configuration data wherein

the first configuration data is indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to said RAID system. The first configuration data includes information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of the first plurality of storage devices. The system also includes a means for comparing the first configuration data stored in the RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any non-responding storage devices that are a part of the first system configuration but are not responding in the second system configuration. The means for comparing also includes means for recording the identities and attachment points of any such non-responding storage devices in a change list. The RAID system also includes means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list. Furthermore, the RAID system also includes means for enabling an "accept change" key in response to the listing of a nonresponding storage device in the change list, the accept change key, when activated by a user, causes the first configuration data to be modified by changing the current state of any non-responding drive to a new state.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a RAID system of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a flow diagram of the process that is executed at power on and that produces the various change lists.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of the process that displays drive identification data for drives that are on a change lists, and enables various options for user responses to the various changes.

FIG. 4 is a diagram of an algorithm for logical drive migration

Table 1 is a code table that lists the configuration data that is stored in each of the disk drive units attached to the system, and is also stored in the RAID controller's NVRAM and flash memory.

Table 2 is a code table that lists the system management data that is stored in each of the disk drive units attached to the system, and is also stored in the RAID controller's NVRAM and flash memory.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIG. 1, the RAID system 100 of the preferred embodiment includes a Small Computer System Interface ("SCSI") bus 101, although other bus architectures may also be used. A disk drive unit 102 can be connected to bus 101, but is illustrated in FIG. 1 as being disconnected from the bus. Disk drive unit 102 includes a well known power reset subsystem 103 that sends a signal out over bus 101 to indicate that a power reset has just occurred. For disk drive units that are designed to be attached to a SCSI bus, the signal that is sent out over the bus in response to a power reset is well known in the art and is commonly called a "unit attention error" signal. Disk drive unit 102 also includes a well known error or defect detection subsystem 104 that can detect defects in the disk drive unit.

Configuration data 105 is stored in disk drive unit 102, for example, in the last 16 sectors of the disk. The configuration data is illustrated in more detail in Table 1, which is a computer code listing of all the data that, collectively, makes up the configuration data. The configuration data 105 includes operating parameter data 106 that includes infor-

mation about the state or status of the disk drive unit, as well as other operating parameters.

For example, the current state of a disk drive is indicated by a 5 bit "state" code, which is found at line 17 of Table 1 and further described in the remarks that follow through line 36. There are 9 state codes that are defined. "ONL" indicates that the drive is "on line." "RBL" indicates that information from a failed drive is currently being "rebuilt" onto this drive. A rebuilding process may take place after a drive has failed, and the data that was lost from the failed drive is reconstructed on a drive that has been temporarily marked RBL. "DDD" indicates a "defunct disk drive." Each of these three disk drive states (ONL, RBL and DDD) are referred to as a "hard configured" state, because these states are only used to identify a disk drive that is part of the current system configuration (note, a defunct drive that is marked DDD is still considered to be part of the current system configuration, despite that fact that it has failed).

Drives that are in a "soft" configured state, are not part of the current system configuration and do not contain valid data. There are five such soft configured states. In the "HS" or "hot spare" state, the drive is spinning and immediately available for use in the event that a currently active drive fails. In this case, the state of the "failed drive" is changed from ONL to DDD. Next, the state of the "hot spare drive" is changed from HSP to RBL and the state of the failed drive is changed from DDD to DHS, and the process of rebuilding the data that was lost from the failed drive begins. DHS is the "defunct hot spare" state. Unlike DDD, DHS is a soft configured state and, therefore, indicates that the drive is no longer part of the system configuration. Immediately thereafter, the state of the hot spare drive is changed from RBL to ONL and this drive is now part of the system configuration. The "SHS" state or "standby hot spare" state is similar to the HSP state, except that the drive is not spinning in this state.

The "RDY" state indicates that a drive is "ready", which means that the drive is available for use and can be moved into another state, such as the SHS state. Unlike the HSP state, a drive that is in the RDY state usually requires user intervention to move it to another state. The "SBY" state is similar to the RDY state, except that a drive in this state is not spinning. The RDY state is the default state for new hard disk drives that are inserted into the system, while the SBY state is the default state for a new tape or CD ROM drive.

The operating parameters also include an indication of the physical location of the drive, such as the "channel number" of line 42 and the "SCSI I.D." of line 43. The channel number identifies the particular bus or bank that the drive has been configured for while the SCSI I.D., which may also be referred to as the "Target I.D.", identifies the particular slot or bay that the drive has been configured for. The "EMP" or "empty" state is not technically a drive state, but indicates that a particular bay is empty, i.e., no drive is installed in that bay.

The configuration data includes product identification and serial number field 107, which is found in line 38 of Table 1. The product I.D. and serial number information is assigned by the manufacturer of the disk drive unit and in many, but not all cases this information is stored at a predetermined address within the disk drive unit. When a disk drive unit is first configured and the configuration data is first saved, the system takes the manufacturer's product I.D. and serial number from the predetermined location and copies it into the product I.D. and serial number field of the configuration data. A user assigned disk drive unit identifi-

cation field 108 is also part of the configuration data which, in Table 1, is located at line 161. At the time the disk drive units are first configured, the user is given an opportunity to enter a unique identification code for all disk drives. The user may, or may not, choose to assign such an identification code.

A time stamp that corresponds to the time that the configuration data is first saved is written into the time stamp field 109 of the configuration data. Time stamp field 109 is provided for the purpose of uniquely identifying the configuration of a disk drive in the event that the manufacturer either fails to assign the product I.D. and serial number information, or such information is stored at a non-standard address within the disk drive unit and, in addition, the user also fails to assign a unique user defined I.D. in field 108.

The update count in update count field 110 is initially set to one, and incremented each time the configuration data is changed; no matter how small the change. Although incrementing the update count is preferred, any other change to this field would be permissible, such as decrementing the count, as long as a unique update count number is assigned each time the configuration is changed.

A second disk drive unit 111 is illustrated in FIG. 1 as being connected to bus 101. Disk drive unit 111 is similar to disk drive unit 102, and includes power reset 112 and defect detection 113 subsystems similar to those of disk drive 102. Configuration data 114 is stored in disk drive 111 and includes operating parameters 115, product I.D. and serial number field 116, user assigned identification field 117, time stamp field 118 and update count field 119 similar to those of disk drive 102.

Both disk drive units 102 and 111 are designed to be "hot swapped" into and out of the RAID system, which means that they can be plugged into and unplugged from bus 101, all without turning the power off. Upon plugging one of the disk drive units into bus 101, power is picked up by the disk drive unit from the bus, thereby causing a power reset of the disk drive unit which, in turn, causes a power reset signal to be sent from the power reset subsystem (e.g., 103 or 112) out over the bus.

RAID controller 120 includes an internal bus 122 that is coupled to SCSI bus 101 via a bus interface unit 121. A processor 123, RAM 124 and ROM 125 are coupled to internal bus 122. A non-volatile memory 126 is also coupled to internal bus 122. Non-volatile memory 126 is preferable of the type commonly referred to as a non-volatile RAM or "NVRAM", which is typically a low power CMOS memory that is powered or backed-up by a battery, such that the information stored in the non-volatile memory will not be lost when the main power is switched off. A timer 127 is also coupled to internal bus 122 and is used to "time stamp" the configuration data of each of the disk drive units in the system. It is not necessary for timer 127 to keep time according to some standard method, such as 24 hour time. Instead, timer 127 may use some arbitrary time system in which the timer is simply incremented at some predetermined interval, such as 1.3 msec, which is the time interval used in a preferred embodiment.

Configuration data is not only stored in NVRAM 126, but also in a well known electrically erasable programmable read only memory (EEPROM) 128, which is also referred to as a "flash" memory. The flash memory 128, however, is only updated at power on, while any changes to the system configuration during operation are stored in NVRAM 124 and also entered into a "device change list", which is also stored in NVRAM and on each disk drive. This device

change list is described in more detail below with regards to the description of Table 2 and later, with regards to FIG. 2. Collectively, the elements of RAID controller 120, such as processor 123 and timer 127, as well as programs and data loaded into memories 124–126, provide the means for performing the various functions described below. Although this programmable computer subsystem is the preferred implementation for carrying out the functions described below, other embodiments may also be suitable, such as the use of discrete hardwired logic.

Each disk drive unit in the system (e.g., 102 and 111) stores, not only its own configuration data, but also configuration data for each and every disk drive unit in the system. Thus, in addition to the NVRAM and the flash memory, each disk drive unit has all the configuration data for the entire system. Furthermore, in addition to the configuration data for each of the disk drives, other system management information is also stored in each disk drive, typically in the last 16 sectors of the disk. This system management information is illustrated in Table 2, which is a code table that illustrates the various types of system management data that is stored in each disk.

Disk drives are physically attached to a RAID system by plugging them into open slots or bays, which are arranged in banks. Each bank is referred to as a “channel” and each bay has an associated “target I.D.” As indicated in Table 2, system management information that is indicative of the particular target I.D. and channel that a drive has been configured for is stored in lines 3 and 4, respectively. In line 5, the configuration data, as described in more detail in Table 1, for each of the disk drives in the system is stored. Following the configuration data, a “device change list” is stored, as indicated in line 6. This device change list is described in more detail below with regards to FIG. 2.

After power up, the RAID controller 120 executes a power on self test routine (“POST”), which is stored in ROM 125 and which begins at step 201, as illustrated in FIG. 2. At next step 202, POST checks for a device change list in NVRAM and if one is found, branches to step 203 wherein flash memory 128 is updated with the latest changes to the configuration data, as recorded in the device change list. If configuration changes are made during system operation, the configuration data in the NVRAM is updated and the change in the configuration data is entered into the device change list. Although configuration data is also stored in flash memory 128, the flash memory is only updated with the latest configuration data after a reset of the RAID controller or at power on (i.e., at step 203). Thus, the device change list only includes the difference between the configuration data in the NVRAM and the configuration data in the flash memory. After the completion of step 203, the device change list is either deleted or modified in some fashion to indicate that there are no current differences between the configuration data in the NVRAM and the flash memory, such as by resetting all the entries in the device change list to zero.

In next step 204, RAID controller 120 looks for a new drive in a previously empty bay. More specifically, the RAID controller is looking for a target I.D. that is marked “EMP” (empty) in the current configuration and that now has a drive in it. If such a new drive is found, it is entered into a “power on change list” at step 205. The RAID controller also looks for each drive of the current configuration. If the controller is unable to find a drive from the current configuration anywhere in the system, that missing drive is also entered into the power on change list at step 205.

In next step 206, RAID controller 120 determines if each hard configured drive of the current configuration is in its

proper location (target I.D. and channel). If not, a “wrong I.D.” list is created in step 207. And in next step 208, the controller looks for any drives that are not part of the current configuration and that are in hard configured locations; i.e., at target I.D.’s that are marked ONL or RBL in the current configuration. If such an unidentified drive is found, it is entered into an “unidentified drive” list in step 209.

After completing the POST routine of FIG. 2 in which various change lists may be created, RAID controller BIOS will execute the routine of FIG. 3, which begins at step 301. At step 302, the controller looks for a power on change list and, if one is found, branches to step 303. At step 303, the controller looks for new drives in previously empty bays. In other words, bays that are marked “EMP” in the current configuration, but now have a drive marked “RDY” or “SBY.” If such a drive is found, its identity is displayed to the user in step 304. More specifically, the old state, new state, channel and bay are displayed. The routine repeats steps 302, 303 and 304 until all such new drives have been displayed in step 304.

If, however, a previously configured drive is missing from the system, the program branches at step 303 to step 305 wherein the identity of the non-responding drive is displayed to the user. More specifically, the old state, new state, channel and bay are displayed, wherein the old state is the configured state, and the new state is the state that the controller will assign to the drive. In next step 306, the “F4” function key is enabled, which is a “retry” option. When F4 is enabled, it gives the user an opportunity to correct the problem and then select the F4 retry key. For example, a drive may not be responding simple because the user failed to insert the drive in the system. After the error message is displayed and the retry key enabled, the user may elect to insert the proper drive into the system and then select the retry key. In addition, the “F5” key is also enabled, which instructs the system to assign the new state, which is displayed on the screen, to the drive. The program repeats steps 302, 303, 305 and 306 until all non-responding drives have been displayed.

In next step 307, the controller checks for a wrong I.D. list, which indicates that a previously configured drive has been found, but in the wrong location. If such a drive is found, the program branches to step 308 wherein the identity of the drive is displayed. More specifically, the old channel and old bay are displayed, followed by the new channel and new bay location. In next step 309, the F6 key is enabled. The F6 key gives the user the option to adjust the configuration. In other words, the configuration data will be adjusted to reflect the new locations of the previously configured drives. In the alternative, the user may elect to physically relocate the drives, and then select the retry key. Steps 307, 308 and 309 are repeated until all “wrong I.D.” drives have been displayed.

In next step 310, the program branches to step 311 if an unidentified drive list is found. In step 311, the identity of the unidentified drive is displayed. More specifically, the host I.D., old channel and old bay are displayed, followed by the new channel and new bay. The host I.D., old channel and old bay are from the drive (not from the NVRAM of the current controller 120), such that it identifies to the user the host I.D., channel and bay that the drive was previously configured for. In most cases, the host I.D., old channel and old bay will identify the system that the drive was previously installed in. The new channel and new bay are the channel and bay that the “unidentified” drive is currently installed in. In next step 312, the F7 key is enabled. In the alternative, selecting the F7 key causes the system to import the con-

figuration from the unidentified drives and to update the configuration controller 120. This choice is useful when the controller has been replaced, or when another system has failed and the disks from the failed system are moved to functional system.

Unattended Mode Operation

The user may configure the system at setup time such that, when one or more function keys are enabled, the system will select one of the enabled functions automatically, thereby removing the need to press a function key. This mode of operation is useful when the system is in a remote location and not readily accessible to the user. If more than one function key is enabled, the function having the corresponding highest numbered function key will be automatically selected. For example, if all function keys are enabled, the function corresponding to the F7 key will be selected. If only the F6, F5 and F4 keys are enabled, then the function corresponding to the F6 key will be selected. If only the F4 key is enabled, however, no function will be automatically selected. Since the purpose of the F4 key is to allow the user to physically reconfigure the system, and physical reconfiguration can only be accomplished by the user, only the user can activate the function corresponding to the F4 key.

Logical Drive Migration Algorithm

In a system with a RAID adapter, it would be desirable to have logical drive migration (LDM) wherein data could be migrated (add/remove physical disk devices) or the existing RAID level of a logical drive (array) could be changed to provide better fault tolerance for the data. This traditionally requires backing up the data, defining a new logical drive, and then restoring the data. This invention, however, allows a user to change the RAID level of an existing logical drive, or to migrate logical drive data by simply issuing an LDM command to the adapter, which then provides a redefined logical drive configuration structure.

Logical drive configuration structure information consists of data such as RAID level, state, number of chunks (areas of disk space), number of sectors of data available to a user, and details of each chunk specifying the disk's SCSI address, starting sector and number of sectors allocated to a logical drive. This invention also permits a user to migrate logical drive data belonging to one RAID level to another RAID level. The primary objective of this function is to provide a mechanism for changing RAID levels. It also allows, with some restrictions, shrinkage and expansion of the logical drive size.

The LDM algorithm imposes the following restrictions:

1. If data between source and destination structures overlap, then the source stripe ordering must be preserved.
2. Start Logical Block Address (LBA) of the first chunk (chunk 0) of the destination logical drive must not be greater than the start LBA of the first chunk of the source logical drive that is to be migrated.
3. The stripe unit size of the source and destination logical drives must be the same.

The logical drive migration algorithm examines the number of source devices, the number of destination devices, the RAID level change requested and the associated stripe unit size to determine the start block, end block, and direction in which to migrate logical drive data. The algorithm decides whether Top Down (TD), Bottom UP (BU) or combinations of TD and BU are to be used as the direction in which data must be migrated to preserve data integrity. The definition of start block and end block, defining the LBA address, have a

different meaning depending on the direction(s) of migration. For example, the start block for the BU direction defines the beginning LBA address of the last block, while start block for the TD direction defines the beginning LBA address of the first block of data. Only one start and one end block address are defined when the data migration is only in one direction, BU or TD, but two start and two end block addresses are defined for data migration in combination directions, BUITD or TD/BU. When migrating data, if the last stripe to be migrated is not on a full stripe boundary, then the last stripe is forced to be on a full stripe boundary, without corrupting data, by calculating adjustment to the blocks of the last stripe of data.

This algorithm is illustrated in FIG. 4, wherein the definitions of the various symbols are as follows:

- Rx: existing RAID level
- Ry: desired RAID level
- DIR: direction (TD, BU)
- TD: top down
- BU: bottom up
- SB1: start block address 1
- SB2: start block address 2
- EB1: end block address 1
- EB2: end block address 2
- NCS: number of chunks in source
- NCD: number of chunks in destination
- SUS: stripe unit size
- SN: stripe number
- EBS: end block source address
- EBD: end block destination address

Managing Defective Media For RAID Adapter

As described above, the RAID 5 algorithm spreads or "stripes" data across multiple physical drive. Each physical drive is made up of "stripe units" and these stripe units are combined across the physical drives to create a stripe of data. Each stripe of data also contains a parity stripe unit to allow reconstruction of data if a single drive failure occurs. Using this parity stripe unit, any stripe unit within the stripe can be reconstructed if a physical drive fails. A logical drive is made up of multiple stripes and a stripe is made up of multiple stripe units wherein each stripe unit is located on a unique physical drive.

When a single physical drive goes defunct and stripe units of data cannot be read from that drive, the data can be reconstructed using the stripe units of the remaining physical drives. A stripe is reconstructed by reading all stripe units in a stripe except the failed stripe unit and doing an exclusive or operation on the data. In the case of a disk rebuild operation, this data is written to a new replacement device designated by the end user. When a logical drive rebuild is performed, each stripe unit is reconstructed until all stripes within that logical drive have been rebuilt. During RAID 5 rebuild operations if media errors are not handled correctly, the user can receive incorrect data from the RAID subsystem.

Media errors on a physical drive can occur that result in the device not being able to supply the requested data for a stripe unit. If a media error occurs during a logical drive rebuild, then the data on the stripe cannot be reconstructed. For example, if a media error occurred while reading a stripe unit on a first disk, then the corresponding (from the same stripe) stripe unit from the second disk could not be reconstructed. If this error is ignored, the next time the user accesses data in the stripe unit of the second disk, incorrect data will be supplied since it was not reconstructed correctly.

To avoid this problem, some RAID controllers report the device with the media errors as a dead device. When this

occurs, the entire logical drive will go off line since the data can no longer be reconstructed (at this point there are 2 stripe units with unknown data). When a logical drive is off line, the user cannot access any data on that logical drive and all data on that logical drive is considered to have been lost. To bring the logical drive back online, the user must replace the device that has the media error, and restore the lost data.

To overcome this problem, this invention uses a table located in the adapter's NVRAM to keep track of stripes that could not be reconstructed successfully. If a stripe could not be reconstructed successfully during a logical drive rebuild operation, an entry is made in a "bad stripe table" containing the logical drive and the stripe number that could not be rebuilt successfully. When the user tries to access data, this table is checked. If there is an entry in the bad stripe table for a stripe being accessed, the user will receive an error message. Although the user may lose a small portion of the data, the user is only presented with an error message instead of incorrect data. Also, if a user decides to reformat this portion of the disk, a disk formatting utility will also receive an error when accessing the portion of the disk in the bad stripe table. When this occurs, the formatting utility will reassign the failing area to another area on the logical drive. The bad stripe table can also be checked on write operations. If an entire stripe of data is written successfully and that stripe is found in the bad stripe table, the entry is removed. To write the entire stripe, sectors that have non-recoverable media errors need to be reassigned by the disk drive or Raid adapter.

This invention can be further enhanced to only keep track of the stripe unit that could not be rebuilt, or by determining which sector (a smaller portion of disk space than a stripe unit) is bad. When the bad sector is determined, only that sector is placed in the bad stripe table instead of the stripe unit or stripe number. The failing sector can be determined by doing single sector reads to the entire stripe unit or stripe number that is failing. If a sector read fails, then only that sector is placed in the bad stripe table. If a single sector write is done successfully to a sector that is contained in the bad stripe table, then the entry is removed from the table. To write a single sector, sectors that have non-recoverable media errors need to be reassigned by the disk drive or RAID Adapter.

The bad stripe table should also be stored on the physical drives attached to the controller. Each time an entry is made in the NVRAM bad stripe table, the bad stripe table is copied to a reserved area in each physical drive. If the physical drives are moved to another controller, the bad stripe table is copied from the physical drives reserved area to the new controller's NVRAM bad stripe table so that this information is not lost.

Another consideration is the layout of the bad stripe table. If there are a lot of entries in the bad stripe table, accessing the bad stripe table for each I/O command can slow down performance. The bad stripe table can be split into multiple tables for each logical or physical device. Also, each entry can be maintained in order and searched using a binary search algorithm.

TABLE 1

```
#define NCHNS 3
// Comments with
// ro/wi is read only write ignore field
// t/w is read write field
// ro is read only field
// =====
typedef struct                                // 36-byte SCSI device state
{
    UCHAR ucInitiator;                        // Initiator = 1, Target = 0, ro/wi
    UCHAR ucParameters;                      // Bits 0-4 device type: matches, ro/wi
                                              // Inquiry cmd: 0 = Disk, 1 = Tape, etc.
                                              // Bit 5 : 0 = 5 MHZ, 1 = Fast Scsi
                                              // Bit 6 : 0 = 8 bit, 1 = 16 bit
                                              // Bit 7 : 0 = no tag que, 1 = tag que
    UCHAR ucMiscFlag;                        // Bit 0 = PFA, ro/wi
                                              // Bit 1 = State data
    UCHAR ucState;                          // 00 = EMP, 04 = DHS, 08 = DDD, 01 = SBY, t/w
                                              // 81H = RDY, 85H = HSP, 89H = ONL, 8BH = RBL
                                              // 05 = SHS
                                              // Bit 7 = Spin,
                                              // Bit 3 = Configured,
                                              // Bit 2 = HotSpare,
                                              // Bit 1 = Rebuild in progress,
                                              // Bit 0 = Present: true if device can
                                              // pass SCSI Test Unit Ready command.
                                              // Bit 7 3 2 1 0 State
                                              // SPN CFG HSP RBL TUR
                                              // 1 1 0 0 1 ONL
                                              // 1 0 1 0 1 HSP
                                              // 1 0 0 0 1 RDY
                                              // 1 1 0 1 1 RBL
                                              // 0 1 0 0 0 DDD
                                              // 0 0 1 0 0 DHS
                                              // 0 0 0 0 1 SBY
                                              // 0 0 1 0 1 SHS
                                              // 0 0 0 0 0 EMP
    ULONG ulBlockCount;                     // Total # sectors not inc reserved, ro/wi
    UCHAR ucDeviceID[28];                   // Inquiry product id & serial number, ro/wi
} DEVSTATE;
```

TABLE 1-continued

```

typedef struct
{
    UCHAR ucChn;           // Channel number: 0 - NCHNS-1, r/w
    UCHAR ucTgt;           // SCSI id R←: 0 - MAX_TGT-1, r/w
    USHORT usMisc;         // set to zero except in CHUNK[0], CHUNK[1] and
                          //CHUNK[2].
                          // CHUNK[3] is in each logical drive is reserved for
                          // client server admin.
                          // In CHUNK[0] and CHUNK[1] it is as follows
                          // bits 1 0:00 ch 0, lo id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 0, lo id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 0, lo id => bank 2
                          // bits 3 2:00 ch 0, hi id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 0, hi id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 0, hi id => bank 2
                          // bits 5 4:00 ch 1, lo id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 1, lo id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 1, lo id => bank 2
                          // bits 7 6:00 ch 1, hi id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 1, hi id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 1, hi id => bank 2
                          // bits 9 8:00 ch 2, lo id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 2, lo id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 2, lo id => bank 2
                          // bits b a:00 ch2, hi id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 2, hi id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 2, hi id => bank 2
                          // bits d c:00 ch 3, lo id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 3, lo id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 3, lo id => bank 2
                          // bits f e:00 ch 3, hi id => bank 0
                          //    01 ch 3, hi id => bank 1
                          //    10 ch 3, hi id => bank 2
                          // Adapter does not process these bits.
                          // it is user defined
    ULONG ulStartSect;     // Start sector for this logical drive, r/w
    ULONG ulNoOfSects;     // No. of sectors allocated to this log drv, r/w
} CHUNK;
typedef struct
{
    USHORT usUserField;    // User defined, r/w
    UCHAR ucState;         // Current status of logical drive = r/w
                          // 03H - OKaY
                          // 04H - CRITical
                          // 02H - OFfLine
                          // 00h - FREe
                          // 05H - LDM
                          // 06H - SYS
                          // 24H - CRS (Critical SYS)
                          // 14H - CRM (Critical LDM)

    UCHAR ucRaidCacheParam; // bits 2-0 - Raid level (0,1,5) r/w
                          // bit 3-6 - 0
                          // bit 7 -1 => Write-Back
                          //    0 => Write-Through

    UCHAR ucNoOfChunkUnits; // No. of chunk units in parity band 1 to 16, r/w
    UCHAR ucStripeSize;     // 0 - 3 reserved for future expansion, r/w
                          // 4 = 8k stripe unit
                          // 5 = 16K stripe unit
                          // 6 = 32K stripe unit
                          // 7 = 64K stripe unit
                          // 8 + reserved for future
                          // NOTE: RAID Adapter RF supports 8K to 64K stripe.

    UCHAR ucParams;         // bit 0 - 0, reserved
                          // bit 2 - 0 data scrubbing is enabled
                          //    1 data scrubbing is disabled
                          // bit 3 - cache bypass on read, ro
                          // bit 4 - 0 copy of write data also in Posiedon, r/w
                          //    1 dual copy disabled
                          // bit 5 - 0 read-ahead enabled, r/w
                          //    1 read-ahead disabled
                          // bit 6 - 0 Reserved
                          // bits 1 and 7 = 0 reserved for future
                          // used by the configurator
    UCHAR ucReserved;       // size of the logical drive, ro
    ULONG ulLogDrvSize;     // details of each chunk unit
    CHUNK chunk[MAX_CHUNKS];
} LOGICALDRIVE;

```

TABLE 1-continued

```

typedef struct
{
    UCHAR board_disc[8];           // board description in ascii. For RAID Adapter RF ro
                                   // this field is 'CPH RF3C'
    UCHAR processor[8];           // local processor description in ascii. ro
                                   // For RAID Adapter RF this field is '403GC-33'
    UCHAR ucNoChanType;           // bits 0-3 - number of I/O (SCSI) channels, ro
                                   // bits 4-6 - channel type, ro
                                   // 000 parallel SCSI wide
                                   // note: RAID Adapter RF only
                                   // supports parallel wide SCSI
                                   // 001 parallel SCSI narrow
                                   // 010 serial SSA
                                   // 011 serial P1394
                                   // 100 serial FC-AL
                                   // bit 7 - 0 reserved for future
    UCHAR ucNoHostIntType;        // number and type of host interface, ro
                                   // bits 0-3 - number of host interface
                                   // bits 4-6 - interface type
                                   // 000 32 bit PCI
                                   // 001 64 bit PCI
                                   // 010 80 MB/sec Micro Channel
                                   // 011 40 MB/sec Micro Channel
                                   // 101 EISA
                                   // bit 7 - 0 reserved for future
    UCHAR ucCompression;         // type of compression hardware, 0 for none, ro
    UCHAR ucNvramType;           // NVRAM cache type, 0 for no cache nvram, ro
                                   // 1 for Posiedon, ro
    ULONG ulNvramSize;           // size of nvram in sectors when present, ro
} HARDWAREDISC;
typedef struct
{
    UCHAR ucNoOfLogDrives;        // No. of logical drives: 1 - 8, r/w
    UCHAR ucDateD;               // date of configuration written, r/w
    UCHAR ucDateM;               // date of configuration written, r/w
    UCHAR ucDateY;               // date of configuration written, r/w
                                   // packed ddmmyy
    UCHAR init_id[ 4 ];          // Initiator Id
                                   // bits 0-4
                                   // Speed bits 5-7
                                   // 000x xxxx - 10MHZ
                                   // 001x xxxx - 20MHZ
                                   // 010x xxxx - 5MHZ
                                   // 111x xxxx - 0MHZ
    UCHAR host_id[ 12 ];         // Chassis # from host, r/w
    UCHAR time_sign[ 8 ];        // Time stamp from RAID Adapter RF clock, ro
} struct
{
    UINT cfgdrv_updcnt :16;      // count of cfgupdate since write cfg
    UINT startup_delay :4;       // delay (sec) between spinup groups
    UINT concur_drvstart :4;     // # of drives to spinup in parallel
    UINT reserved :3;           // reserved
    UINT stage :1;              // 1 = stage data during migration
    UINT cluster :1;            // 1 = adapter is part of a cluster
    UINT bios_compat :1;        // 1 = compatibility, 0 = extended
    UINT boot_cdr :1;           // 1 = boot from CDROM, 0 = from drive
    UINT auto_rearrange :1;     // 1 = auto rearrange, 0 = just list
} UserOpt;
    USHORT user_field;          // User defined
    UCHAR ucRebuildRate;         // Rebuild Rate, r/w
                                   // 01h = low, 08h = mid, 0Fh = high
                                   // set to zero
    UCHAR ucReserve;
} CONFHDR;
typedef struct
{
    CONFHDR configheader;        // configuration header
    HARDWAREDISC hardware_disc; // hardware description
    LOGICALDRIVE logical_drive[ MAX_LOG_DRVS ]; // describing each logical
                                   // drv
    DEVSTATE dev[ NCHNS ][ MAX_TGT + 1 ]; // Info about device at
                                   // each adr
} CONFIGURATION;

```

TABLE 2

UCHAR	ucRepTblCnt;	// Number of entries in ReplacementTbl	
UCHAR	ucDevChgCnt;		5
UCHAR	tgt;	//SCSI Target ID	
UCHAR	chn;	//SCSI Channel	
CONFIGURATION	cfg;	// Full copy of configuration struct	
DEVCHGLST	DeviceChangeList[MAX_DEV_CHG_LST];		
RTENTRY	ReplacementTbl[MAX_LOG_DRVS];		10

We claim:

1. A RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to said RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points, said RAID system comprising:

means for storing first configuration data, said first configuration data being indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to said RAID system, said first configuration data including information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of said first plurality of removable storage devices;

means for comparing the first configuration data stored in said RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any new storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration but are not a part of the first system configuration, for identifying any non-responding storage devices that are a part of the first system configuration but are not responding in the second system configuration, for identifying any repositioned storage devices that were located at a one attachment point in the first system configuration and were repositioned to a different attachment point in the second system configuration, and for identifying any unidentified storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration but are not part of the first system configuration, and for recording the identities and attachment points of any such new, non-responding, repositioned, and unidentified storage devices in a change list;

means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list;

means for enabling an "accept change" key in response to the listing of a non-responding storage device in the change list, said accept change key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified by changing the current state of any non-responding drive to a new state;

means for enabling a "configuration adjustment" key in response to the listing of a re-positioned storage device in the change list, said configuration adjustment key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified to reflect any changes in the attachment points of any repositioned storage devices;

means for enabling an "import configuration" key in response to the listing of an unidentified storage device in the change list, said import configuration key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified to correspond to the system configuration of an unidentified storage device; and

means for enabling a "retry" key in response to the listing of a storage device in the change list, said retry key, when activated by a user, causing said means for comparing to re-compare the first configuration data

stored in said RAID system to the second system configuration, thereby giving the user an opportunity to rearrange the configuration of the second system configuration to correspond to the first system configuration.

2. A RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to said RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points, said RAID system comprising:

means for storing first configuration data, said first configuration data being indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to said RAID system, said first configuration data including information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of said first plurality of removable storage devices;

means for comparing the first configuration data stored in said RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any unidentified storage devices that are a part of the second system configuration but are not part of the first system configuration, and for recording the identities and attachment points of any such unidentified storage devices in a change list;

means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list; and

means for enabling an "import configuration" key in response to the listing of an unidentified storage device in the change list, said import configuration key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified to correspond to the system configuration of an unidentified storage device.

3. The RAID system of claim 2, wherein:

said means for comparing further includes means for identifying any non-responding storage devices that are a part of the first system configuration but are not responding in the second system configuration, and for recording the identities and attachment points of any such non-responding storage devices in the change list; and

said RAID system further includes means for enabling an "accept change" key in response to the listing of a non-responding storage device in the change list, said accept change key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified by changing the current state of any nonresponding drive to a new state.

4. A RAID system for use with removable and identifiable storage devices that can be attached to said RAID system at a plurality of different attachment points, said RAID system comprising:

means for storing first configuration data, said first configuration data being indicative of a first system configuration in which a first plurality of removable storage devices are configured for attachment to said RAID system, said first configuration data including information regarding the identity, attachment point and the operational state of each one of said first plurality of removable storage devices;

means for comparing the first configuration data stored in said RAID system to a second system configuration and for identifying any non-responding storage devices that are a part of the first system configuration but are not responding in the second system configuration, and for recording the identities and attachment points of any such nonresponding storage devices in a change list;

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means for displaying the identities and attachment points of any storage devices that are listed in the change list; and

means for enabling an "accept change" key in response to the listing of a non-responding storage device in the change list, said accept change key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified by changing the current state of any non-responding drive to a new state.

5. The RAID system of claim 4, wherein:

said means for comparing further includes means for identifying any repositioned storage devices that were located at a one attachment point in the first system configuration and were repositioned to a different

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attachment point in the second system configuration, and for recording the identities and attachment points of any such repositioned storage devices in the change list; and

said RAID system further includes means for enabling a "configuration adjustment" key in response to the listing of a repositioned storage device in the change list, said configuration adjustment key, when activated by a user, causing the first configuration data to be modified to reflect any changes in the attachment points of any repositioned storage devices.

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